

CHAPTER III

LATER VALLEY SETTLEMENTS

The early settlers who came to Provo Valley were interested in establishing homes and gaining their livelihood from agriculture. In this semi-arid region they were forced to depend largely upon irrigation to make the land productive. Those who moved in from other sections of the state were already familiar with this system of getting water to the land, and those who were new were soon impressed with its necessity. A brief reference to the map of the area shows the pioneer settlements strung along the river and streams like ornaments on a tree. It would not be an overstatement to say that in the beginning the size of the settlement was almost directly proportional to the amount of accessible irrigation water. The importance of irrigation and the way in which the pioneers cooperated to obtain the necessary water is the subject of a later chapter. Suffice it here to say that the availability of irrigation water was the determining factor in the selection of sites for pioneer settlement in Wasatch County.

Later in the County's history a number of other factors gave rise to settlements and impetus to the growth of those already established. The growth of Keetley can only be explained in terms of successful mining, and work in railroad shops meant much to Soldier's Summit. We have considered the settlement of Heber previously. How and why the other towns and cities of the County grew is the subject of this chapter.

MIDWAY

Provo Valley is roughly divided into an eastern and western half by the river that runs through it. On either side of the river a number of large streams lattice the

terrain which slopes up and away from the river to the nearby mountains. The settlement at Heber was designed to take advantage of the water supplied by Lake



Midway and surrounding area

and Center Creeks on the eastern side of the valley.¹ At about the same time a number of settlers began work along Snake Creek on the west side. This was the beginning of what later came to be known as Midway.

At first there was no localized settlement. In the summer of 1859 a group consisting of Jeremiah Robey, Sidney Epperson, Mark Smith, David Wood, Jesse McCarrell, and Edwin Bronson put a crop of grain on the choicest lands bordering Snake Creek.² This was followed by a period of cabin and corral building. Others

¹John Crook, "A Statement of Securing the Water Rights of Heber City," (MSS in possession of Clark Crook, Heber Utah, 1889).

²Statement by Emily Coleman, personal interview, 1952.



Fort Midway plan showing location of each family